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THE DARK NIGHT.

"I can't stand it any longer, Jane, I'll go out, and perhaps something will turn up for us."

"It's a cold night, Robert"

"Cold, yes! But it's not much colder outside than in. It would have been better if you had married John Tremain," he said bitterly

"Don't say that dear Robert; I've never regretted my choice."

"Not even now, when there is not a loaf of bread in the house for you and the children?"

"Not even now, Robert. Don't be discouraged. God has not forsaken us Perhaps this evening the tide will turn, and better days will dawn upon us to-morrow."

Robert Brice shook his head despondingly.

"You are more hopeful than I, Jane Day after day I have been in search of employment; I have called at fifty places, only to receive the same answer everywhere"

Just then little Jimmie, who had been asleep, woke up

"Mother," he pleaded, "won't you give me a piece of bread? I am so hungry."

"There is no bread Jimmy, my darling," said the mother with an aching heart

"When will there be some?" asked the child piteously.

Tears came to the mother's eyes. She knew not what to say.

"Jimmy, I'll bring you some bread," said the father hoarsely, and he seized his hat and went to the door

His wife, alarmed, laid her hand upon his sleeve. She saw the look in his eyes, and she feared to what step desperation might lead him.

"Remember, dear Robert," she said solemnly, "it is hard to starve, but there are things that are worse."

He shook off her delicate little hand but not roughly, and without a word passed out

Out into the cold streets! They would be his only home next, he thought. For a brief time he had the shelter of a cheerless home in a cold tenement house, but the rent would become due at the end of the month, and he had nothing to meet it.

Robert Brice was a mechanic, competent and skilful. Three years since he lived in a country village where his expenses were moderate and he found no difficulty in meeting them. But in an evil hour he grew weary of his village home, and he emoved to the city. Here he vainly hoped to do better. For a while he met with very good success, but he found the tenement house in which he was obliged to live, a poor substitute for the neat little cottage which he had occupied in the country. He saw his mistake but he was too proud to go back

"Of course I can't have as good accommodations here as in the country," he said, "but it is something to live in and be in the midst of things."

"I'd rather be back again," said his wife. "Some how this city doesn't seem like home. There I used to run and take tea with a neighbor, and have a pleasant, social time. Here, I know scarcely anybody."

"You'll get used to it after a while," said her husband.

She did not think so, but she did not complain.

But a time of great depression came and with it a suspension of business enterprise. Work ceased for Robert Brice and many others If he had been in his old home, he could have turned his hand to something else, and at the worst could have borrowed of his neighbors until better times But the friendly relations rising from neighborhoods do not exist in the city to the same extent as in the country. So day by day he saw his scanty sum of money waste away, and no one extending a hand. Day by day he went out to seek work, only to find himself one of a large number, all of whom were doomed to disappointment. If he had been alone he could have got along somehow, but it was a sore trial to come to a cheerless room and a pale wife and hungry children with to relief to offer them.

When on that evening Robert Brice went into the streets, he hardly knew how he was going to redeem the promise he had made to little Jimmy. He was absolutely penniless, and had been so for three days.

There was nothing that he was likely to find to do that night

"I will pawn my coat," he said at last. "I cannot see my wife and children starve."

It was a well worn overcoat, and that cold winter night he needed something more to keep him warm. Weakened by enforced fasting, he was more sensitive to the cold, and shivered as he walked along the pavement.

"Yes," he said, "my coat must go, I know not how I shall get along without it, but I can't see the children starve before my eyes."

He was not in general an envious man, but when he saw sleek, well fed citizens, buttoned up to the throat in warm overcoats, come out of the brilliantly lighted shops, provided with luxuries for happy children at home, while his were starving, he suffered some bitter thoughts upon the inequality of Fortune's gifts to come to his.

Why should they be so happy and he so miserable?

There was one man, shorter than himself warmly clad, who passed him with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his overcoat. There was a pleasant smile upon his face He was doubtless thinking upon the happy circle at home.

Robert knew him as a rich merchant, whose ample warehouse he often passed He had applied to this man only two days before for employment and had been refused. It was perhaps, the thought of the wide difference between them, so far as outward circumstances went, that led Robert Brice to follow him

After a while the merchant, Mr. Grimes, drew his handkerchief from his pocket. As he did so, he did not perceive that his pocket book came with it and fell to the sidewalk.

He did not perceive it, but Robert did. His heart leaped into his mouth, and a sudden thought entered his mind. He bent quickly down and picked up the pocket-book. He raised his eyes hastily to see if the movement was noticed. It was not.

The merchant went on unheeding his loss.

"This will buy bread for my wife and children," thought Robert instantly.

A vision of the comfort which the money would bring that cheerless room, lighted up his heart for an instant, but then, for he was not dishonest, there came another thought. The money was not his, much as he wanted it.

"But I cannot see my wife and children starve," he thought again. "If it is wrong to keep his money God will pardon the offence. He will understand my motive.

All this was sophistry, and he knew it. In a moment he felt it to be so. There were some things worse than starvation. It was just what his wife said before he came out. Could he meet her gaze when he returned with food so obtained?

"I've lived honest so far," he thought "I won't turn thief now."

It was with an effort that he came to this decision, for all the while before his eyes there was that vision of a cheerless home, and could hear Jimmy vainly asking for food. It was with an effort that he stepped forward and placed his hand on the merchant's shoulder, and extended the hand that held the pocket book.

"Sir," he said hoarsely, "you have dropped you pocket book."

"Thank you," said the merchant, turning around, "I hadn't perceived my loss"

"You dropped it when you took out you handkerchief."

"And you saw it and picked it up I am very much obliged to you."

"You have reason to be," said Robert in a low voice "I came very near keeping it."

"That would have been dishonest," said Mr. Grimes, his tone altering slightly.

"Yes, it would, but it's hard in a man to be honest when his wife and children are without a crust."

"Surely, you and your family are not in that condition?" said the merchant earnestly.

"Yes, said Robert, "it is only too true.'

"And you are out o work?"

"For two months I have vainly sought for work. I applied to you two days since."

"I remember now. I thought I had seen you before. You still want work?"

"I should be grateful for it."

"A porter left me yesterday. Will you take his place $12 a week?"

"Thankful, sir; I would work for half that."

"Then come to-morrow morning, or rather, as to morrow will be a holiday the succeeding. Meantime take this for you present necessities."

He drew from his pocket a bank note and put it in Robert's hand.

"It's $50," said Robert, amazed.

"I know it. This pocket book contains $1,000. But for you I should have lost the whole."

"God bless you, sir; good night!"

"God bless you, sir; good night!" said Robert.

"Good night."

Jane waited for her husband, in the cold and cheerless room, which for a few days longer she might call her home

"Do you think father will bring me some bread?" asked little Jimmy, as he nestled in her lap.

"I hope so my sweet darling," she said, but her heart misgave her. She feared it was a delusive hope.

An hour passed—there was a step on the stair—her husband's. It could not be, for this was a cheerful, elastic step, coming up two stairs at a time. She looked eagerly at the door.

"Yes, it was he. The door opened, Robert, radiant with joy, entered with a basket full of substantial provisions.

"Have you got some bread, father?" asked Jimmy, hopefully.

"Yes, Jimmy, some bread and meat from a restaurant, and here's a little tea and sugar. There's a little wood left, Jane Let's have a bright fire and comfortable meal, for please God, this shall be a comfortable night."

"How did it happen? Tell me, Robert."

So Robert told his wife, and soon a bright fire lighted up the before cheerless room.

The next week they moved to a better home. They have never since known what it is to want. Robert found a firm friend in the saving's bank, and has reason to remember, with grateful heart, God's goodness on the Eve of Temptation.

Who is Old.

A wise man will never rust out. As long as he can move or breathe he will be doing something for himself, for his neighbor, or for posterity. Almost to the last hour of his life Washington was at work; so were Howard, Young and Newton. The vigor of their lives never decayed. No rust marred their spirits It is a foolish idea to suppose that we must lie down and die because we are old. Who is old? Not the man of energy; not the day laborer in science, art or benevolence; but he only who suffers his energies to waste away, and the springs of life to become motionless; on whose hands the hours drag heavily, and to whom all things wear the garb of gloom. "Is he old?" should not be asked, but "Is he active?" "Can he breathe freely and move with agility?" There are scores of gray-headed men we should prefer, in any important enterprise. to young men who fear and tremble at approached shadows, and turn pale at a harsh word or a frown, as at a lion in their path.

SLANDERS.—Yes, pass it along, whether you believe it or not; that one sided whisper against the character of a virtuous female. You say you don't believe it, but you will use your influence to bear up the false report, and pass it on the current. Strange creatures are mankind! How many reputations are lost by surmise! How many hearts have bled by a whisper! How many benevolent deeds are chilled by the shrug of a shoulder! How many individuals have been shunned by a gentle, mysterious hint! How many chaste bosoms have been wrung with grief by a single nod! How many graves have been dug by a false report!

Yes, you will pass the slander along! you will keep it above the water by a wag of your tongue when you might sink it forever. Destory the passion for telling a tale, we pray. Lisp not a word that may injure the character of another. Be determined to listen to no story that is repeated to the injury of another, and as far as you are concerned the slander will die. But tell it once and it may go.

The most mischevious liars are those who keep just on the verge of truth.

Better than Discipline.

'We must have a church-meeting,' said Deacon W. to his pastor, as they rode up the long hill together. 'There is a case requiring discipline.'

'Indeed,' said the pastor inquiringly, for he had not been many months with the church.

'Yes,' said the deacon: 'Brother T. is bringing reproach upon the cause. There was a disgraceful row at his store the other knight.'

'A row! what do you mean? Not a drunken row?'

'Yes, a drunken row. The church must take up his case.'

'Does Brother T. sell liquor?'

'Yes, and it is a crying shame; we must do our duty as a church.'

A pause.

'Have you ever expostulated with Brother T.?' asked the pastor.

'Never.'

'Has any member of the church, to your knowledge?'

'No. Brother T. is too old a man, and too firmly set in his ways.'

The conversation ended, but the pastor sought out another brother in the church, gifted with the general good will and of a persuasive tongue.

'Come, Brother M., let us go and have a talk with Brother T.,' said the pastor.

'Get some one else,' said Brother M.

'No. I lay the conscription on you. There is no discharge in this warfare.'

Brother M. resisted, but at last unwillingly went.

The two found Brother T. alone in store on the dusty turnpike. Brother M.'s faith was so small that, he stood aloof almost, as if rebuking his pastor for the, intrusive service he had undertaken.

'Brother T.,' said the pastor, 'I heard that you had some trouble with your customers the other night.'

'Yes, I did.'

'How did it happen?'

'Why a teamster called to get a drink, and—'

'A drink of water?'

'No; a drink—a drink of—'

'Do you sell intoxicating liquors?' asked the pastor kindly and frankly. It relieved Brother T.'s embarrassment to answer squarely.

'Yes, I do sometimes.'

'Do you think it right?'

'Well, I am careful to whom I sell, and it is my chief reliance for my business."

"Do you think it right, Brother T.?"

"Well, no, I suppose not. I think of giving it up."

'Yes, that's right,' said the pastor; 'and *begin* by telling her that you have resolved never again to put the glass to yours neighbor's lips.'

Brother T. hesitated, and the pastor proceeded as if the decision was already made.

'When?'

'I haven't made up my mind exactly.'

'Better not wait, Brother T.,' said the pastor and went on plying him affectionately with motives drawn from the love of Christ.

'Would you run the risk of destroying him with your drink for whom Christ died?'

Brother T. was silent and thoughtful, evidently conscience stricken and affected. Brother M. felt the changed atmosphere and drew nearer. The pastor pushed his advantage. At length Brother T. said:

'Well, I will talk the matter over with my wife to night.'

'Yes, Brother T., I would make a thorough thing of it. I would not even sell a glass of ale.'

The pastor thought now he would call in a reinforcement from Brother M., He appealed to him:

'Brother M., you would advise Brother T. to give up selling even ale and strong beer, wouldn't you?'

Brother M. came to his pastor's support with all his persuasive eloquence Brother T. yielded a point. He would give up selling liquor when his present stock was gone.

"Why will you then give up?"

'Because I am satisfied that it is wrong.'

'Is it not wrong now?'

Brother T. saw how untenable his new position was. He yielded everything to the Christian motives faithfully and affectionately applied by his two brethren. Before they left him, the brother that the deacon said must be disciplined, had pledged himself never again to sell a glass of liquor. They rode off together, glad at heart because they had gained their brother.

A few mornings after the paster took an early horseback ride over to Brother T.'s store. Brother T. had not come. The boy told the pastor that they did not sell any more liquor there. After that it was pleasant to hear Brother T. take his part in the prayer meetings—His first part was confession.—*W. C. Wilkinson, in American Messenger.*

WHAT A KIND WORD DID.—There was once a schoolboy named Robert, who passed for a dull one among his companions, and was ridiculed and called "blunderbuss," etc.

It happened one day that some of the members of the school committee were examining the pupils in drawing. With downcast eyes Robert timidly held up his specimens amid the half-suppressed laughter of his comrades.

"Don't be ashamed, my boy," said one whom we will call Mr. Curtiss. "I made worse looking trees and horses when I began to draw. Go on, you'll conquor—will even surpass me, I'm thinking." He then drew a sketch and gave it to the boy, saying, "There, see what can be done by perseverance."

This little incident gave Robert a start in life Those words were for him as solid capital well invested.

Several years after, Mr. Curtiss was extolling some architectural drawings which a friend had shown him. He commended in the highest terms both the designs and their style of execution! "The architect considers himself indebted to you for his success," said his friend.

"Me!" exclaimed Mr. Curtiss, "I don't understand."

"Do you remember encouraging a boy at the hillside school, and giving him this sketch!" replied the other, producing the small drawing before mentioned.

"That boy," continued the informant, is the executor of these designs. At the time you spoke to him, he was much depressed by reason of the incessant and torturing persections of his schoolmates and was on the point of giving up school altogether, and going to work with his father at his trade. which was that of a carpenter. Your words however, nerved him with new energy and spirit, and your little sketch became to him as a talisman throughout the whole of his subsequent school life."

A MARVELOUS STORY.—The Savannah (Ga.) *Advertiser*, of the 31st ultimo has a correspondent who tells the following tough story, which he vouches for as strictly true:

There lives within five miles of Wel, born, Florida, a human alligator. Yes, it is true, and his name is Abby Adams. He is now 13 years of age. He was born of a respectable woman who is now a widow with several children. For two years I have tried to obtain this wonder for the New York museum, but his mother and family will not part with this, their pet. His breast bone is sharp and projects far out. His arms and hands resemble the feet and legs of an alligator. His lower half, from his hips down, are simply bones covered with skin. He is stiff in the hip joints. He can sit up with legs stretched out. If he lies down on his back his feet and legs stick upright. He cannot feed himself except to put his head down and bite or eat like an animal. His head is large and he is an intelligent boy. His mother is very poor, consequently he cannot be educated.

NEVER PRAYED.—At the close of one of our great battles of the late war a young soldier lay dying. A Christian comrade, by whose side he had fallen, earnestly besought him to make his peace with God. Among the pleas offered to induce him to submit to Christ was this:

"Perhaps even now your dear mother is praying for you."

With a smile of contempt the dying man replied, "My mother never prayed." In a few moments he was in eternity.

Prayerless mothers, can you with confidence look upon your enslaved children and say, if they die impenitent and unsaved, God will not require their blood at your hands?

"Sir, you have broked your promise," said one gentleman to another.

"Oh, never mind! I can make another just as good."

What is A Darling?"

A darling, as we should speak the word, would mean a very dear, good, heart-loved girl or woman, who held the innermost place in our heart. She would be a woman loved above all the rest in the world; a woman whom we should defend before all mankind; a woman whose lips were those of truth and sacredness; whose happiness a man could live for; a woman a man would be proud of; a woman you could put your arm in gentleness around, draw her to your heart, press a kiss to her forehead, and one on her lips, and as her head rested half on your shoulder, look deep into her eyes and whisper, "darling!"

She would be a women in whom we had all the confidence in the world; one a man would be proud to make happy, and whose pride would be in her husband's success, happiness, reputation, her own good name, her person, her friendships, her house, and the purity of her heart. Darling means everything, words unspoken, careless ripening for love to feed on, volumes unwritten, kind action waiting opportunity, hope unexpressed, faith untold for want of suitable words; it is the flower which beautifies the trees that bears the most delicious fruit in season. The word is a volume. It means more than one can express; the clasping of the spirit hands, of love in heart worship of the bud of the pure and good; the word raiobow which spans the sky of hope and life, the bursting of the bud of the most beautiful flower which sheds a perfume over the head of those we love.

Among the strange situation in life here are few stranger or in some respect, more painful, than the meeting after long absence, of those who when they had parted years before, were on terms of closest intimacy, and who now see each other, changed by time, with altered habits and manner, and improved in a variety of ways with influence and associations which imparr their stand on character. It is very difficulty at such a moment to remenber how far we ourselves have changed in the internal, and how much of what we regard as altered in another may not simply be the new stand point from which we are looking and to us our friend may be graver, or sadder or more thoughtful, or as it may happen, seem less reflective and less considerative, than we have thought him—all because the world has been meantime dealing with ourselves in such wise that qualities we once cared for have lost much of their value, and others that we had deemed of small account have grown into importance with us.

Most of us know the painful disappointment of revisiting scenes which had impressed us stongly in early life: how the mountain we regarded with a wandering admiration, had become a mere hill and the romantic tarn, a pool of sluggish water; and some of this same awakening pursues us in our renewal of old intimacies and we find ourselves continually warring with our recollections.

Beside this, there is another source of uneasiness that presses unceasingly. It is in imputing every charge we discover, or think we discover, in our friend, to some unknown influences that have asserted their power over him, in our absence, and thus when we find that our argument have lost their old force and our persuasions can be stoutly resisted, we begin to think that some other must have usurped out place, and that there is treason in the heart we had deemed to be loyally our own.—*Charles Lever.*

MAIDENLY SYMPTOMS OF CELIBRACY,—When a woman begins to drink her tea without sugar—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to read love stories abed—that's a symptom.

When a women begins to sigh on hearing of a wedding—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to say that a servant has no business to have sweethearts—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to refuse to toll her age—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to put her fingers before her mouth when talking to a man, for fear he should see that she is loosing her teeth—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to go to bed with her stockings and a flannel night cap on—that's a symptom.

When a women begins to grumble about cold draught, and stops up the crevices in the doors and windows—that's a symptom.